

The Comparative Paragraph

An Overview

The Purpose

Your goal is to either compare two things or contrast them....

- **Comparison** shows similarities between persons, places, things, ideas, or situations.
- **Contrast** points out the differences between persons, places, things, ideas, or situations.

Two Approaches

1. If you let A and B stand for the two things (subjects) being compared, then you can use the **block method** in which you tell all about A, then tell all about B. Thus you discuss A in a block and B in a block.
2. If you let A and B stand for the two things (subjects) being compared, then you compare them **point by point**. Every time you say something about A, you also say something about B – right in the same sentence or in the sentence immediately following.

Source: Donald, Moore, Morrow, Wargetz, Werner, *Writing Clear Paragraphs*, Prentice Hall, 1978.

How To Write This As A Paragraph

- Write the insight regarding how the two items are alike or different – the big idea. This is the topic sentence. For a Level 3, you are identifying the comparison; for an Level 4, you should be making a judgement.
- Write the body using either the block method or the point by point method.
- Write a conclusion that restates the big idea.

In William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Antony gives a more persuasive speech because he uses logos and elevated language while Brutus relies heavily on appealing to the crowd's emotions. Both speeches contain pathos, an appeal to emotion. For example, Antony starts with, "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears" (Act.Scene.Line) and Brutus says, "Romans, countrymen, and lovers!" (Act.Scene.Line). Both speakers address the crowd in a familiar way by calling them "friends" and "lovers", which situates the speakers in a place of trust and positions the crowd as equals to them. They do this to gain sympathy from the crowd. Antony discreetly adds logos into his speech in order to refute claims made by Brutus, who continues with Pathos throughout his whole speech. For example, Antony speaks with authority by using the upper class blank verse when addressing the crowd. He acknowledges his love for Caesar and Brutus's honour but then states facts that contradict Brutus. For example he says, "Yet Brutus says he was ambitious/And Brutus is an honourable man./You all did see that on the Lupercal/I thrice presented him a kingly crown,/Which he did thrice refuse" (Act.Scene.Line). In juxtaposing Brutus's claims regarding Caesar's ambition with the facts that Caesar refused to turn Rome into a dictatorship by refusing the crown three times, Antony calls into question Brutus's honour. In contrast, Brutus's whole speech relies on the people's sympathy using his honour and their pride. Brutus says, "why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer:Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more"(Act.Scene.Line). Here, Brutus is admitting that Caesar was overly ambitious and that this ambition would eventually turn Rome into a dictatorship where the common people would become slaves. He admits that his desire to prevent that, due to his love for the common people, his audience, outweighs his love for Caesar. Unfortunately, Brutus does not provide any proof to support his claims and, furthermore, Brutus speaks using prose throughout his entire speech, which is the diction used by the common people so he loses authority in doing this as well. Since Antony uses facts to disprove Caesar's ambition and holds a higher position of authority through his diction and syntax, he challenges the audience's perspective regarding Brutus's honour and credibility. Since Brutus is not able to refute the facts because he relies entirely on Pathos, Antony's speech is more persuasive.